INDIANA *COMMISSION*
HIGHER EDUCATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY SIGNALS SUPPORT FOR
NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

As part of the appropriation bill for the 1999-2001 Biennium, the Indiana General Assembly adopted language that establishes Indiana's new community college system and provides implementation funding. $520,000 was approved for the spring 2000 semester and $1,490,000 for the 2000-2001 academic year.

Governor Frank O'Bannon hailed the measure as a "giant step forward for giving all Hoosiers lifelong learning opportunities, which are so necessary if the men and women of Indiana are to earn a living in the competitive global economy of the 21st century."

The governor proposed in January that Vincennes University and Ivy Tech State College team up to expand two-year degree opportunities at all 22 Ivy Tech sites over the next six to eight years. The legislature provided $6.2 million to freeze tuition at the two partnering institutions.

The partners had planned to begin offering classes this fall. Final legislation pushes this date back a semester, to January. "As it became clear that legislators wanted to have more discussion, we knew we were running out of time to start this fall," said Stan Jones, Indiana's Commissioner for Higher Education.

One key point of discussion was the location of initial start-up sites. A policy committee had chosen five sites: Indianapolis, Lafayette, Muncie, Marion, and Anderson. The final legislation did not specify sites but limited implementation to 10 Ivy Tech campuses over the next three years. The legislation also said the system may not be implemented at any site where an Indiana or Purdue University regional campus exists until after June 30, 2002, with one exception if approved by the Governor.

Jones said the next step would be for the policy committee to continue reviewing start-up sites and developing implementation plans. "The General Assembly has signaled its strong support for the initiative, which will ensure that the community college system gets off to a good start."